



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Silver Star

Maj. Jim Gant, of Las Cruces, N.M., and Iraqi National Police Col. Dhafir share a hug as they meet before their ceremony at a Iraqi National Police Headquarters in Baghdad May 3. Gant was awarded the Silver Star Medal for valor.

A "paradigm shift" in Al Beida

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - 1st Lt. Larry Graham had come to talk about power generators, but the members of the Ur Neighborhood Council had something else on their minds.

The previous morning, Graham's unit had arrested the father of one of the council mem-

bers. The council was angry.

"We don't want you here. We need engineers. Electricians. We don't need killers," one of the members began the meeting by saying.

Some of the other U.S. officers in the room bristled, and tried to change the subject. But Graham told the man to continue.

"If that's what he wants to talk about, tell him we are here to

listen," Graham told his interpreter.

"The wind could blow this away tomorrow," he said, holding up the meeting's planned agenda. "We are here to build relationships."

As the war in Iraq continues, there is a consensus that military successes alone will not be enough to achieve victory. Progress on the battlefield must

be matched by political progress. That idea has led American commanders on the ground to focus on building up local government institutions like neighborhood councils.

The job often falls to young officers like Graham.

Graham, of Springfield, Mo., is the fire support officer

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Troops begin Project Water Flow to give locals fresh water

By Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Water, water, everywhere and not a drop to spare at a water treatment plant. That is what the Soldiers of Company A, 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, found when they arrived at an access water point for the Karkh Water Treatment Plant in Tarmiyah, Iraq.

Although the Soldiers were successful in initiating repairs on a badly leaking pipe May 2, there is more work to do to stop the estimated 280,000 gallons of fresh water leaking daily.

As the sun slowly started to show itself on the Iraqi capital's horizon, Soldiers unloaded heavy generators and pumps, and numerous lengths of tubes and hoses at the water plant. Project Water Flow was underway.

After determining how to set up their equipment to best execute the mission, the Soldiers



(Photo by Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

Soldiers with Company A, 115th BSB, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., set up a pump and generator in order to pump water out of a flooded building during a humanitarian mission to repair a water pipe at the Karkh Water Treatment Plant May 2.

learned it was going to be a very long day.

They started pumping at the rate of approximately 800 gallons of water a minute, but the terrain and the security barriers at the site forced the water being drained off by the pumps back into the flooded facility.

After a few small adjustments of the hose, they continued to pump water out of the pump house for a couple of hours, which looked more like a deep

sea holding tank for dolphins. Drain the area would require at least 12 hours of pumping.

"Frustrated with the fact that water was flowing into the building faster than it was being pumped out, the Iraqi Soldiers are going to be shutting the water off to expedite the repair mission more effectively," said Lt. Col. Tyler Osenbaugh, the commander of the 115th BSB.

Once they shut the water off, they'll be able to pump the

water out more quickly and repair the leaky pipe by applying farmer's clamps designed to slow leaks down and the sealant to prevent the leakage.

A native of Toledo, Ohio, Osenbaugh said this is a band-aid solution until they are able to get engineers to complete the repair the proper way by splitting the pipes and replacing the seal which is causing the leak.

"You're kind of helping out people and they're appreciating what we're doing, said Detroit native Pfc. Carlos Smith, a 22-year-old with the unit. "Right now, we might not see the appreciation of the people, but when we do missions like this we get together with the Iraqi Army and everyone is working together. It doesn't seem so much like war than it does peace keeping."

Every mission supports the Iraqi people one way or another, Smith explained. "If I get shot today or blown up tomorrow, I am doing it for these people," Smith added.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 101
Low: 74



Tomorrow

High: 100
Low: 74



Monday

High: 100
Low: 73

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Citizens of Al Beida see results in their community

Al Beida

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for Company D, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment. Since February, the unit has been based at an outpost in Al Beida, a neighborhood just a stone's throw from Sadr City, in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District.

In those two months, Graham has worked hard to build up the neighborhood councils in Al Beida and Ur. His goal is to get the councils to the point where they can identify problems and implement solutions at the grass-roots level, he said.

"What we're trying to achieve is a paradigm shift," said Graham. "We want to show (the people) that in spite of the bad people living in this area, they can still move forward, they can still accomplish their goals."

He attends council meeting regularly, and spends much of his day on his mobile phone, smoothing over problems. One evening Graham was behind his desk when he got a call from one of the council members. The man was trying to back out of attending an upcoming meeting.

"What's wrong?" Graham asked patiently. "Is there something I should know?"

The man confessed that he was scared of being attacked if he went to the meeting. Graham assured him that security would be tight. The man agreed to come.

Graham, 28 and boyish-looking, makes a good ambassador. The son of missionary parents who spent much of his childhood in Latin America and Europe, he has a talent for cross-cultural communication. He also has experience working with local government bodies, having served on the neighborhood advisory



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Abu Ra'ad, a contractor, and 1st Lt. Larry Graham of Springfield, Mo., a fire support officer with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, shake hands at the grand opening of a new soccer field in the Al Beida neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District April 21.

sory council in Springfield.

"It was a lot of the same stuff I'm doing now, but I never thought I'd be doing it in Baghdad," he said.

Graham's goal is not to solve the community's problems, but to empower the NAC to come up with solutions itself, he said.

"We're here to be the grease that makes it work smoothly," he said.

Graham's work with the Al Beida NAC has so far led to the completion of two projects. On April 21, the NAC dedicated a new soccer field and a new gate on a local girls' school.

Graham helped the NAC apply for the funds to complete the projects. The labor was provided by a local contractor.

"They're small projects, but they're important," said Graham. "The small things show they can manage larger things."

After a brief ribbon cutting

ceremony at the school, Graham and the NAC members moved to the soccer field, where a throng of children was waiting. Word had gotten out.

The site of the new soccer field had previously been a dump, said Ayad Hassan, a NAC member who helped oversee the project.

"The children had no place to play," Hassan said.

Now there was a level playing field, benches, and new goalposts.

The gate to the field was locked. On the other side of it, a hundred gleaming, white soccer balls were strewn across the field. After a little boy snipped the ceremonial ribbon, the gate was thrown open and the crowd of kids poured through like a dam bursting. The stampede kicked up a cloud of dust that obscured the view. Then from out of the dust, a young boy emerged clutching a

soccer ball tight to his chest, a smile spread ear to ear on his face.

Graham said the success of projects like the school gate and the soccer field will lead people in the community to rely more on the NAC for solutions to their problems.

"The community has really started to buy into it," Graham said. "They're seeing results and they're like, 'Oh, the system does work.' So they're asking for more projects and they're going to get more projects."

As the children ran happily amuck on the soccer field, Hassan and Abu Raad, the contractor who built the field, shook hands. They were proud of what they had accomplished.

"This is the first step," Hassan said. "One day, I hope that my area will be better than any area in the world."

Why Boston will win the Clemens sweepstakes

May is here and Major League Baseball has completed its first month of play. Many teams are positioning themselves early for a run at the playoffs. Others are already realizing this year is a wash (see Kansas City and Washington).

Three teams in particular, though, are auditioning for the services of one of the greatest pitchers in the history of baseball, Roger Clemens. "The Rocket" is primed and ready to suit up for another run at a World Series title.

The New York Yankees, the Boston Red Sox and the Houston Astros are all in contention to land "The Rocket." Which team will he sign with next month? Glad you asked.

Hometown Houston?

Let's start with the Astros. They seemingly would have the inside track for Clemens. After all, Clemens has pitched for them the previous three years. Although he pitched well last season, the Astros struggled to give him any consistent run support. They did add left fielder Carlos Lee for additional power in the line-up, but so far the Astros have struggled, starting the season a meager 11-15. That record currently has them fifth in the senior circuit's Central Division.

The Astros also drafted Cody Clemens, who is currently in their minor league system as a catcher. You know Roger would love to pitch to his son, Cody in an MLB game. This, to me, would seem to be enough to keep Roger in Houston.

The only problem here is that Houston isn't considered a contender, even for a wild

Trigger Pull

Pfc.
Benjamin
Gable



card spot, in the National League. With Cody some time away from being a major league prospect, and the Astros struggling to reach .500, look for Roger to play elsewhere.

Pinstripe Party?

Then you have the mighty New York Yankees. Who doesn't love the boys in pinstripes? (Don't answer that.) Yankee Stadium is one of the true hallowed grounds in baseball. Clemens has already won a World Series title with the Yankees, and his close friend Andy Pettitte, made the move from Houston back to New York. Then you have "The Boss", George Steinbrenner. Steinbrenner has a \$200 million payroll and expects nothing short of a World Series ring.

The Yankees pitching this year has been terrible, though. Three of their starting five pitchers are already injured. Two are on the 15-day disabled list, and the other is out 6-8 weeks.

Even though they have future Hall of Fame players such as Alex Rodriguez, Mariano Rivera and Derek Jeter, they still stumbled through the first month with a 10-14 record.

Offense is rarely a problem for the

"Bronx Bombers," and that is something Clemens needs to be able to work deep into games. But with so many injuries and so much drama in the Yankee clubhouse, Clemens will look elsewhere.

Two-hundred million dollars won't buy the Yankees a World Series, or a "Rocket."

Back to Boston

That leaves only one team, the Boston Red Sox. The "Bo-Sox" are off to a red-hot start this year. They are in first place in the American League East with a 17-9 record.

And don't forget, Boston is where it all began for Clemens.

The Red Sox drafted Clemens 19th overall in the 1983 draft. He went on to win multiple Cy Young Awards and the Most Valuable Player Award for Boston. This is where Roger Clemens became "The Rocket."

With Boston off to a great start this year, look for them to be World Series favorites; and look for Clemens to be the game one starter.

The Red Sox have a great lineup with players such as Manny Ramirez and David Ortiz in their prime. They have a solid pitching staff and one of the best young closers in the game in Jonathan Papelbon.

One thing is clear; Clemens will only pitch for a legitimate contender. Boston is the front-runner at this time. He is 44 years old and may not have too many years left. This is his best chance to win another title.

Bostonians: get your champagne on ice because Clemens will end his Hall of Fame career in Boston where he started; and the Red Sox will once again be World Series champions.



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

IMPROPER TIRE MAINTENANCE

A Soldier was putting air into a split-rim tire when the rim exploded causing a serious injury.

LESSON LEARNED

Tire Cage Was Not Available

Soldier Was Standing On Tire

ENSURE YOU

- Use proper equipment** such as tire inflation cage, ten (10) foot extension air hose and air chuck/gauge with locking clips when conducting tire maintenance.
- Under no circumstance** should any object be used to force an improperly seated multi-piece tire rim into compliance.

STAY ALERT --- STAY ALIVE